

WORKSHOP 1			WORKSHOP 2		
	WEAKNESSES	THREATS	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	IMPLEMENTATION
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Core Strategy is too urban focussed; the needs of the rural areas are ignored. The Core Strategy needs to be 'bottom up' in terms of the evidence base and the issues affecting individual communities as well as 'top down' in terms of the RSS Rural areas are not defined Policies for the AONB are too prescriptive Local Development Framework process is too complicated Pockets of urban areas have similar problems to rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of commercial sites and community facilities to housing Highworth and Blunsden are already commuter towns Loss of post offices often leads to closure of village shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning policy for rural areas is generally restrictive in terms of development. Such an approach is effective in terms of protecting the countryside and retaining the character of the rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller settlements can accommodate development provided it is as of an appropriate scale Development can improve the sustainability of rural communities Self-containment should be the aspiration for the larger villages Smaller villages where community facilities would not be viable should be linked to larger villages to help support their local services. Village cluster policy should be considered Pockets of land that would benefit from environmental enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swindon BC has to implement the RSS therefore the options are limited A better evidence base is needed for rural areas to help identify specific issues affecting individual communities. Better dialogue with the BC and stakeholders is needed. Villages need to be more integrated with Swindon – better transport links. S106 monies from developments in rural areas should be ring-fenced rather than directed at facilities for the Borough e.g. canal Core services should be protected Hierarchy of settlements
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The car is a necessity in rural areas Evening bus services are either limited or non-existent Footpath and cycle network is poor. Roads are too dangerous to cycle on. Park and Ride closes too early and pricing policy discourages use – it is cheaper to park in the centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising fuel prices will impact on communities in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport during the day is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve cycle / footpath links – utilise existing resources such as disused railway lines Rising fuel prices should be viewed as an opportunity to encourage modal shift or to use local services and facilities Better publicity is needed for local bus services – communities often are not aware of services until they are under threat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Infrastructure Study may help to identify opportunities for improvements to footpath / cycle ways. Flexi-bus services should be encouraged as a means of getting people out of their cars Pricing strategy for parking should be reviewed to encourage people to use more sustainable forms of transport.
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning policy for economic development is too restrictive in the rural areas Opportunities to re-use existing buildings should be considered flexibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closure of shops in rural areas has a serious impact on the vitality of the area Rents and rates are too high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tourism potential of the area should be capitalised on – proximity to the Cotswolds (Highworth) and the history and character of many of the other rural settlements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve employment potential of rural areas through allocation of more sites for commercial uses Planning policies should be more flexible in terms of change of use and less restrictive generally. Environmental enhancements can make areas more attractive to businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principle of rural exception sites should be applied to all core facilities Employment floorspace should be made available in line with local market requirements e.g. small starter units Assistance should be given to promote and develop tourism potential of the rural areas

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Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability is the key weakness of housing in the rural area The dwelling numbers for the rural areas of the Borough outlined in the RSS (1200 dwellings to 2026) are insufficient to meet local needs Resistance to development (NIMBYism) – politicians need to look at benefits arising out of new development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of affordable housing without necessary facilities e.g. public transport, schools, employment etc Coalescence of villages, particularly those closest to Swindon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mix and character of houses in the rural areas were identified as a particular strength. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional housing should be allocated in the rural areas to help keep facilities such as schools open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of development should be appropriate to the size of the village More family housing is needed as opposed to flats. The housing mix should be appropriate to the local need of the particular village. S106 money arising out of development in a village should be spent on improvements to services and facilities within that village
Climate Change/ Renewable Energy				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for wind farms should be investigated Value in shared community resource provided it is appropriate in scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas could be identified in the Core Strategy for renewable energy schemes. These should be appropriate in scale to the village. Energy efficient measures should be a requirement in all new development – possible overlap with Building Regulations.
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Group generally felt that there was not enough specific communication between Swindon Borough Council and the rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although Parish Councils are consulted, they are often given insufficient time to respond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with Parish Council's was good subject to being given sufficient time to respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forums were seen as a good example of community engagement A rural cluster (not North Swindon) event should be held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better publicity Promote understanding of the planning system particularly the parameters within which it must operate. Plain English and no jargon should be used in all consultation material